

**Assessing and Exploring the Attachment in Foster Children Through the Use of
the Bird's Nest Art Therapy Task and Narrative Story**

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Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to my wonderful family in Ukraine—particularly my mother, Lubov Grankina, who has always fostered in me a love for knowledge and creativity. Despite how crazy my ideas may have sounded, you still have always supported and believed in me.

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Abstract

Assessing and exploring the attachment in foster children through the use of the
bird's nest art therapy task and narrative story

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The purpose of this research study was to assess and explore attachment patterns in foster children between seven to eleven years of age using an art therapy assessment called the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND). Three participants with a history of at least two foster home placements participated in this study. Two of the children were female and one child was male. All children were African-American.

The results in a number of studies indicate that children in foster care are at elevated risk of developing behavior and mental health problems and insecure attachments (Finzi, et al., 2001; Klassen, 2000). A thorough understanding of this problem is essential to clinicians working with this population in order to plan and provide appropriate interventions and treatment. This pilot study, in which children were asked to draw a bird's nest and tell a story about their drawing, was conducted in order to understand and assess attachment patterns in foster children.

All children in this sample were assessed as insecurely attached and each one's drawings and stories shared themes of isolation, vulnerability, fear, lack of protection, some type of a threat to the well-being of the birds living in the nest and loss of the bird's nest. Despite the negative themes in the children's artwork and narratives all participants ended their stories with positive endings, which suggests they may have wish-fulfillment fantasies or feel hopeful about their future.

The findings of this study suggest that the children who participated were able to use the metaphor of the bird's nest effectively, which provided valuable

information concerning their attachment experiences. This suggests that the BND can be a valuable and effective tool to collect information about a child's attachment experience and possibly assess attachment patterns within one 50-minute session. The findings suggest that information obtained during the BND assessment can be used by clinicians to track a client's progress and plan treatment and interventions more efficiently during art therapy.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this pilot observational study was to assess and explore attachment patterns in foster children of seven to eleven years of age using an art therapy assessment, the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND), developed by Kaiser (1996). Children's drawings were rated based on the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Furman, & Kaiser, 2011). A series of questions were asked regarding the drawings' content and story. In addition, each child was asked to tell a story about his or her drawing. If children did not introduce an event in their explanations of the drawings, then they were asked to imagine that something happened to the nest and describe what it might be.

In 1996 Donna Kaiser developed the BND art therapy assessment based on Bowlby's attachment theory. The main purpose of this assessment is to identify the individual's attachment pattern based on the art indicators in his/her drawing. The assessment may also be used to help understand the child's home environment and family relationships.

This research was not focused on the reasons that have affected attachment in foster care children, but rather on how these children commonly experienced at least two phenomena – maltreatment/neglect and separation which may often result in insecure attachment and put these children at risk of developing psychological, cognitive, and behavioral problems. A number of research studies have indicated that foster children are in higher need for mental health services than children living with their biological families (Blumberg, Landsverk, Ellis-MacLeod, Ganger, & Culver, 1996; Chernoff, 1994; Rosenfeld, et., 1997; Smith, Howard, & Monroe, 2000).

Clausen, Landsverk, Ganger, Chadwick and Litrownik (1998) conducted a quantitative multi-site study (N=267) that found 75% to 80% of the foster children in the sample scored a high rate of behavior and/or social problems compared to other children. Also according to Leslie, Landsverk, Ezzet-Lofstrom, Tschann, Slymen and Garland's (2004) quantitative longitudinal study (N=480), about half of the foster children exhibited the need for mental health services and 41.5% had already received some type of mental health treatment within 18 months after the separation from their family of origin.

According to AFCARS report (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau, 2011) in the state of Pennsylvania 39.2% of children entered foster care because of some type of maltreatment, which includes neglect (20.3%), physical abuse (12.2%), and sexual abuse (6.7%). Parental substance abuse, parents' inability to cope, a child's treatment needs, voluntary request for a placement, inadequate housing, parental absence, etc. account for other reasons which result in a child's removal from his or her home (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011; Takayama, Wolfe, & Coulter, 1998).

A number of studies have indicated that maltreated children tend to exhibit insecure attachment (Finzi, Cohen, Sapir, & Weizman, 2000; Finzi, Ram, Har-Even, Shnit, & Weizman, 2001; McCarthy & Taylor, 1999). Maltreatment often is a precursor to difficulties in forming secure attachment to parents and other people in a person's life. Subsequent removal from home at a young age adds an additional factor of inability to separate in a healthy manner from the family compared to children who

separate from their parents naturally as young adults. Therefore, abrupt separation from the biological family at a young age is a risk factor for psychological problems. It is also important to note that the high stress environment, often caused by abuse, may also affect the development of the brain and attachment behaviors (Van den Dries, Juffer, IJzendoorn, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2009).

Bowlby in his works on attachment theory (1988), has theorized that the experience of loss and separation from the primary caregiver at a young age may have detrimental effects on a person's attachment in all of his or her subsequent relationships; this has been also supported by other experts (Littner, 1976). Traumatizing experiences of separation/loss of the parental figure or primary caregiver can interfere with normal psychological development and may often lead to unresolved conflicts, overpowering feelings of fear and anger, inability to resolve childhood grieving, developmental problems, and psychopathology (Cassidy & Mohr, 2001).

There are a number of empirical studies that indicate high rates of developmental, behavioral, and social problems of foster children and that also address other aspects of the foster care system (Blumberg, et al. 1996; Chernoff, 1994; Clausen, et al., 1998). Currently, however there are only a few studies that have explored attachment patterns of foster care children through the use of metaphor. Metaphor may allow a child to share his or her lived experience of separation and loss. In unpublished master's thesis Natalie Hoffman used a phenomenological design (N=3) to explore the experience of insecure attachment for latency age foster children through the use of metaphor (Hoffman, 2010). This study did not assess the

attachment patterns of the children; the primary focus was to explore each child's subjective experience and his or her concept of mother (Hoffman, 2010).

In another study (N=23) Whiting and Lee III (2003) explored foster children's experience; children were interviewed and a storyboard was used to facilitate the conversation. This study indicated that most children experienced confusion, loss, anger, and fear (Whiting & Lee III, 2003). It was suggested that story telling with the use of life books or art could be effective in promoting a child friendly format to facilitate discussion with children (Garbarino & Stott, 1992 as cited in Whiting and Lee III, 2003).

To date, there is no published research study on the use of the BND with foster care children that would be used to assess and explore their attachment pattern. The following eight master's level research studies are unpublished and cited by Kaiser and Deaver (2009) and employed the use of the BND with a variety of populations; pregnant women (Overbeck, 2002), school-aged children (Hyler, 2002; Sheller, 2007), adolescents diagnosed with anorexia (Fine, 2002), college students (Reyes, 2002), adolescents in foster care system (Trewartha, 2004), hospitalized adolescents with a history of parental substance abuse (Lenssen, 2006), and persons diagnosed with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders (Shannon, 2010). In addition, the BND has been used in the studies with a sample of mothers (Kaiser, 1996) and adults with substance abuse disorders (Francis, Kaiser & Deaver, 2003).

The research objective of this study was to use the BND to assess foster children's attachment pattern and explore the experience of attachment through the story created by the child. The new approach of adding the use of a narrative story to

the BND, an event created by the child, may bring valuable information of the child's inner experience and further the understanding of attachment phenomenon in foster children.

Delimitation of this study was the small number of participants (N=3). In addition, all children were in the seven to eleven age range and came from the same foster care agency. These delimitations imply similar demographics and make this study not generalizable to all foster care children. The limitation of the study included the possibility of any unpredictable personal incidents in the child's personal life on the day of data collection that may have impacted the study findings.

The findings from this study provided a clearer picture of some of the aspects of the child's experience of trauma, separation and loss, which may help clinicians develop effective treatment plans and case planning in the future. The foster care agencies may also find the study results valuable to train staff, and inform social workers and prospective foster parents to better understand this population.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Foster Care

Statistics/Demographics

It is often in the best interest of children to live with their biological parents. However, due to various reasons, some parents are incapable of providing adequate child care or, in some cases, may even be a danger to their children. When this occurs, Child Protective Services Agencies are forced to intervene and temporarily relocate children into foster care. It is important to note that for the children in foster care the experience of abandonment, separation, loss, abuse, and neglect often results in unresolved childhood mourning, psychological conflicts, insecure attachment that often lead to poor school performance, developmental, social, and behavioral problems, and emotional issues.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010), as of September 2009, there were over 400,000 children residing in some type of foster care in the United States. The mean age of foster children is 9.6 years and the average length of stay is 26.7 months. There are many reasons why children enter foster care. Some of the most common reasons for entering foster care are abuse and neglect (Landsverk, Burns, Stambaugh, & Reutz, 2006; Pecora, White, Jackson, & Wiggins, 2009; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2011). Other reasons may include parent substance abuse, abandonment, parents' inability to cope, inadequate housing, child treatment needs, and death of the biological parent/s.

When children in foster care are placed, they may live in a number of settings and may move between several types of settings if the initial foster placement fails.

According to foster care statistics for 2010 (Child Welfare Information Getaway, 2012) children were placed in the following settings:

- non-relative foster family homes (48%);
- relative foster homes also known as kinship care (26%);
- institutions (9%), group homes (6%);
- trial home visits (5%) in which the State retains supervision of a child and the child returns home on a trial basis;
- adoptive homes (4%);
- 2% were considered runaways; and
- 1% live in supervised independent living (SIL).

For a half (51%) of foster children the preferred goal was reunification with parent(s) for permanent placement. While 25% had a goal of adoption, 6% had a goal of long-term foster care, 6% had a goal of emancipation (refers to both the emancipation of minors and youth who age out, depending on state policy, of foster care between 18 and 21), 4% had a goal of living in kinship care, 4% had a goal of guardianship, and 5% did not have an established goal (Child Welfare Information Getaway, 2012).

Professionals often do not know whether they need to help a child placed in foster care to cope with this temporary separation, or to help a child cope with a separation that could eventually lead to permanent loss of the parent. This uncertainty follows the child throughout his or her time spent in the system.

High-Risk Population

Children entering the State's legal custody are at higher risk for developmental, mental, and medical issues (McMillen, et al., 2004; Pasztor, Hollinger, Inkelas, & Halfon, 2006; Pecora, et al., 2009). Reams (1999) conducted a mixed methodology study (N=144) that found 78% of children previously lived in poverty, 60% were exposed to domestic violence, 32% were exposed to drugs in utero, and 73% of their biological parents had a history of chronic substance abuse. Of these children, 65.5% received a DSM-IV diagnosis. The most common diagnoses were adjustment disorders (40%), language disorders (21%), reactive attachment disorder (15%), and posttraumatic stress disorders (6.5%). Due to missing data from foster parents and age restrictions on certain assessments, the number of children may be less for different analyses and findings than those described above. No more current studies were found that would address these statistics.

Harman, Childs, and Kelleher (2000) in their quantitative study (N=39,500) found that foster children were 3 to 10 times more likely to receive a mental health diagnosis and were 7.5 times more likely to be hospitalized on the basis of a mental health condition than children living with their biological parents. Leslie, Hurlburt, Landsverk, Barth, and Slymen (2004) in their study (N=462) with foster children ranging from the ages of 2 to 15 years at the time of sampling found that over half of the sample were receiving mental health services and that there is evidence for a substantial need for such services among foster children.

Research clearly has indicated that foster children tend to exhibit problematic behaviors and deficits in their adaptive functioning. The findings from multi-site

study (Clausen, et al., 1998) of foster children (N=267) indicated that 75-80% of children scored in the problematic range on the behavior and/or social competence areas. Over half of these children scored over the borderline cut-off point, and over 40% scored over the clinical cut-off point on a total behavioral problems scale. The researchers stated that these children were drawn from a pool of three counties in California. They suggested that it is likely that children in the sample share certain common elements in their backgrounds such as living in traumatic conditions due to maltreatment and/or poverty in their communities, which may have affected their development of mental health issues and behavioral problems.

Blome (1997) conducted a study using a secondary analysis of existing longitudinal data collected from 1980 to 1986 from 334 youth, of which 167 were in the foster care system and another 167 were living with at least one biological parent (the sample of foster youth was reduced from 167 to 140 and from 167 to 150 in the comparison group due to participants' withdrawal). According to the findings, the samples of foster youth dropped out of high school at a higher rate and were less likely to have completed a GED or have received a high school diploma than the group living with their biological families. Within five years after leaving school, 23% of the foster youth had not received a high school diploma or GED certificate, compared with 7% of youth in the comparison group. In addition, youth in foster care experienced more discipline issues including suspensions and placement on probation and had lower educational performance; they received mostly "C" grades while the comparison group reported mostly "B" and "C" grades. Almost twice as many youth in the foster care sample reported being in "serious trouble with the law".

Two main factors put foster care children at significantly high risk for mental health problems. First, most foster children experience some type of abuse and/or neglect, which often creates obstacles preventing children from developing an appropriate attachment. Second, children in foster care experience separation from their biological family at an early stage of life. The combination of these two factors puts foster children at a disadvantage. This situation creates an inability to separate from the parents in a healthy manner. The usual expectation is that when they are mature and ready, as it would naturally occur for children who reach a certain age living with their parents, they would make a decision to separate from their birth family, go to college or create their own family. (Littner, 1976).

Foster Children and Separation/Loss

As mentioned previously, another reason foster children are at higher risk of psychopathology is that they experience separation from their families of origin. Initial separation from a caregiver followed by a foster home placement interrupts a child's relationship with his or her biological parent(s), which threatens his or her perception of these relationship—especially when maltreatment is involved. Separation or loss of a parent has a profound effect on the child regardless of when in this happens. Repeated separations, which many foster children experience, often have a negative effect on the development of healthy attachments and the child's ability to form close relationships in the future (Katz, 1987).

Vera Fahlberg (2012), a pediatrician and psychotherapist, stated that experiences of interruptions in parenting may have a negative impact on “the child's progress in sorting out their perceptions of the world” (p.144). Fahlberg further

suggested that “children who have been abruptly exposed to different routines and environments during infancy may have their sense of security upset enough that they may become less flexible in the future” (p. 144). Fahlberg also suggested there are a number of factors influencing a child’s reaction to the separation or loss of a parent:

- 1) the child’s age and stage of development,
- 2) the child’s attachment to the parent,
- 3) the parent’s bonding to the child,
- 4) past experiences with separation,
- 5) the child’s perceptions of the reasons for the separation,
- 6) the child’s preparation for the move,
- 7) the “parting message” the child receives,
- 8) the “welcoming messages” he receives,
- 9) the post-separation environment,
- 10) the child’s temperament, and
- 11) the environment from which he/she is being moved (p. 142).

Studying a child’s reaction to separation may also be beneficial to professionals, as it may provide information on his or her attachment to the caregiver. Fahlberg adds that the stronger the relationship with the parent, the more traumatic the loss can be experienced by the child, and the more the loss is unanticipated, the more challenging it may be for the child to undergo the process of grieving (2012).

Child psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Ner Littner (1976) suggested that regardless of the reasons for separation from the biological family, children tend to experience feelings of abandonment, rejection, helplessness, loss, worthlessness, and

humiliation. Often children react to these feelings with anger, anxiety, and self-blame. If not addressed and resolved, these feelings can leave scars on a child's personality. Another potential effect is that the child may unconsciously expect that all future relationships will perish, which may predispose him or her to withdrawal, fear of emotional closeness, increased sensitivity to future separations, and other negative post-traumatic effects.

Littner suggested that a foster child has to resolve four main tasks: (1) overcome the feelings of separation from his or her biological parents; (2) overcome the feelings of being placed with foster parents; (3) resolve the feelings that may be caused by any other separation from the foster parents; (4) master the feelings of being close to new parents. According to Littner, regardless of age, every foster child has to resolve these tasks while resolving all the other developmental tasks that come with normal phases of childhood. If these tasks are not resolved, then the child is unconsciously compelled to repeat the past by provoking rejection in all his or her relationships in order to resolve the inner conflict.

From a young age, foster children often experience severe and repeated losses. In a qualitative study with adults (N=22) who formerly lived in foster care, Unrau, Seita, and Putney (2008) revealed that the placement moves were remembered as a series of profound losses and left "imprinted negative emotional scars, particularly in the area of trusting people and building and maintaining relationships" (p. 1256).

These researchers identified six areas of losses:

- 1) loss of power over one's personal destiny,
- 2) loss of friends and connections to school,

- 3) loss of personal belongings,
- 4) loss of (or separation from) siblings,
- 5) loss of self-esteem, and
- 6) loss of normalcy.

Also identified similar themes in their qualitative study (N=23) conducted by Whiting and Lee III (2003), in which children reported the loss of family, friends, foster parents, and possessions, and they reported feelings of fear, anger, and confusion that were associated with those losses. According to Fahlberg (1991), foster children's young age and developmental level, in addition to previous separation experiences, often contribute to a feeling that is similar to the experience of the death of a family member.

Separation produces intense and continual emotional distress, which often results in maladaptive behavior such as lying, bullying, substance abuse, stealing, withdrawal, and aggressive and hostile behaviors towards peers and foster parents. Newton, Litrownik, and Landsverk (2000) in their study reported that (N=415) youth in foster care externalizing problematic behaviors were the strongest precursor for placement changes, which is consistent with the results of other studies' findings that children who are aggressive and dangerous are more likely to be moved to another setting.

Attachment

Attachment, or being attached to someone, means that one seeks to maintain proximity to a specific caregiving figure and does so even more in situations in which he/she is tired, sick, or frightened (Bowlby, 1988). This specific attachment figure

(the primary caregiver) provides the child with a substantial sense of security, which will encourage him or her to continue and value this relationship. Attachment theory proposes that attachment relationships are essential and impact healthy personality development of the individual and his or her optimal functioning (Goldberg, 2000; Lopez & Brennan, 2000). The main purpose of attachment is to provide a secure base and protection and security when one is frightened, threatened, hurt, or sick; and as an ongoing affectionate relationship but in cases of maltreatment, the protection and security are at risk. In cases in which a child cannot rely on a caregiver as a secure base, the child may have to use defensive methods to deal with overwhelming fears and stress. As this child grows older, his or her attachment pattern is likely to endure, which then may lead to expectations of similar maltreatment in subsequent new relationships (Cicchetti & Toth, 1995).

Patterns of attachment play an important role in a child's development. The pattern of attachment that an individual develops during his or her infancy and childhood is influenced greatly by the way his or her primary caretaker(s) interact with him or her. This attachment pattern then impacts the individual's ability to attach to others.

In his theory of psychosocial development, Erik Erikson posited that there are eight stages of development with specific tasks that a child must resolve in order to successfully progress and grow (Erikson, 1963). For the purposes of this thesis, we will focus only on the first developmental stage: Trust vs. Mistrust. If the caretaker is responsive, the child develops a basic sense of trust and therefore will feel safe and secure in the world and also a sense that life and people are basically good. If the

caretaker is not responsive or is not emotionally available, the child develops a sense of mistrust. Considering foster children who are often raised in an environment in which the need for nurturance and safety is not consistently met—and in some cases even maltreatment is present—then children often learn not to trust their primary caregivers to meet their basic needs. Therefore, children without a secure base may in the future develop and internalize the belief that the world is unsafe, and that they cannot safely trust others.

Drawing on Bowlby's theory, Mary Ainsworth conducted a number of research studies and developed a procedure called the "Strange Situation." Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters & Wall (1978) conducted this procedure and observed the behavior of an infant in a laboratory room, which contained toys and other interesting objects. The mother first allowed the baby to explore the room, and then researchers observed the baby in a series of the following eight episodes in the unfamiliar but safe experimental room:

- 1) The observer introduces the mother and her baby to the experimental room, then leaves.
- 2) With the mother and baby alone in the room, the mother allows the baby to explore the room.
- 3) A stranger enters the room and makes a gradual approach to the baby.
- 4) The mother leaves the baby and the stranger alone in the room.
- 5) The mother returns to the baby and is instructed to attract the baby's interest with a toy while the stranger leaves.

- 6) The mother leaves again and the baby is left completely alone in the room.
- 7) The stranger returns to the room with the baby.
- 8) The mother returns and the stranger leaves.

In her work, Ainsworth described three main patterns of attachment that were revealed in the set of observational studies using the “Strange Situation” above. These main attachment patterns include insecure avoidant, securely attached and insecure resistant. The three patterns of attachment are described as follows:

1) Insecure avoidant attachment (Group A) – the child behaves similarly towards parent and stranger, avoiding contact with his or her parent during reunion and showing less distress while alone than other children. The child tends to have no confidence that seeking care will elicit a positive response, therefore avoidance may be viewed as an attempt to avoid the parent’s anger and agonizing rejection in repeated response to demands (Bowlby, 1989; Lopez & Brennan, 2000)

2) Secure attachment (Group B) – the child actively explores his or her environment and interacts with strangers in the presence of the parent who is supportive, available, and responsive. After the separation from the parent, the child greets or seeks interaction with his or her parent upon reunion. In this case, the parent serves as a base to aid the child’s self-regulation and relieve distressed feelings (Rholes, Simpson & Blakely, 1995), which helps the child to develop confidence in coping with the world (Bowlby, 1988).

3) Insecure resistant attachment (Group C) – the child is limited in exploratory behavior in the presence of the parent, becomes distressed by the parent’s departure

and becomes alert in the presence of the stranger. When the parent returns, the child's contact-seeking behavior is ineffective, and he/she appears to be angry, demanding, and difficult to comfort. The child can become anxious in exploring the world and exhibit attention-seeking behaviors (Cassidy & Mohr, 2001). It is suggested that insecure resistant attachment tends to lead to predisposition of the individual to antisocial behavior and aggression as a result of misjudged social cues and inappropriately regarded negative and/or antagonistic intentions of others towards the self (Klassen, 2000).

Main and her colleagues later developed and validated a fourth attachment pattern known as disorganized/disoriented attachment also called Group D (Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985; Waters, Merrick, Treboux, & Crowell, 2000). In contrast to children in groups A, B and C, Group D children have not developed a consistent coping mechanism and exhibit disorientation upon reunion with their parents, a fright response based on prior interactions. Their disorientation was exhibited by the following behaviors: confusion, rage, depressed effect, unpredicted movements (e.g., slow movement, incomplete movement, freezing) and strong proximity to the parent followed by strong avoidance. It is suggested that maltreated and/or neglected children may fit into this group (Cassidy & Mohr, 2001).

Attachment and Maltreatment

Certain attachment patterns influence a person's functioning in the following areas: social skills, regulation of affect, coping in stressful circumstances and functional/dysfunctional relationships (Bowlby, 1969). In the past few decades, a number of studies examined the link between insecure attachment patterns of

maltreated children and their abusive/neglectful parents. The results of these studies have indicated that maltreated children tend to develop social, behavioral, emotional, and cognitive disorders (Ammerman, Cassisi, Hersen & Hasselt, 1986; Cicchetti & Toth, 1995; Gauthier, Stollak, Messe & Aronoff, 1996). Considering that foster children also experience major separations, losses, and broken affectional bonds, Bowlby (1973; 1979) has taught that the overpowering synthesis of intense anxiety and anger and unresolved childhood mourning in early childhood may produce damaging effects on an individual.

Maltreatment from a caregiver may present challenges to a child's ability to regulate the stress system. A number of studies have examined the correlation between cortisol production and attachment among foster children. Gunnar, Larsob, Hertsgaard, Harris, and Bordersden (1992) conducted a study that found young children exhibit elevated cortisol levels, a steroid hormone which is released in response to stress, when they faced stressful situations while under care of insensitive caretakers.

Carlson and his colleagues (1998) found in their longitudinal study (N=157) that for participants, attachment disorganization was profoundly correlated with environmental factors like caretaking quality, single parenting, and a history of maltreatment. The results also suggested that attachment disorganization may put an individual at increased risk of psychopathology, and a combination of attachment disorganization, behavior problems, and parent-child boundary problems predicted the occurrence of psychopathology in adolescence.

The findings from a comparative study (N=190) children aged 6 to 12 (Finzi, Cohen, Sapir, & Weizman, 2000) suggested that maltreated children were at risk for psychopathology. This study was conducted to compare how three different types of maltreatment—abuse by fathers who misuse substances (n=76), physical abuse (n=41), neglect (n=38)—impact children's emotional development and their attachment pattern. Children from non-abused/non-neglected group (n=35) served as a control group. Half (52%) of the children with fathers who misused substances were classified with secure attachment pattern, while the other 48% were classified with anxious/ambivalent—also known as insecure resistant attachment (Group C)—and were considered at possible risk for behavioral problems and drug abuse in adolescence. The highest numbers of children classified with avoidant attachment pattern (85.4%), also known as insecure avoidant pattern (Group A)—were among physically abused children, who were also at risk of antisocial behavior and acted persistently suspicious towards others. The frequency of the anxious/ambivalent pattern (insecure resistant attachment pattern or Group C) was highest among children who were neglected (73.7%). In addition, these children were considered to be at risk of feelings of inadequacy, social withdrawal, and rejection. The secure attachment pattern (Group B) was the highest among children who were not maltreated by their caregivers (68.6%).

Finzi, Ram, Har-Even, Shnit, and Weizman (2001) conducted another similar comparative study (N=114) that examined the attachment patterns of children who suffered from prolonged physical abuse or neglect. Children from physically abused group (n=41) were significantly classified with avoidant attachment pattern (85.4%);

7.3% of these children were classified with anxious/ambivalent and only 7.3% were assessed with secure attachment pattern. Children from this group were also at risk of antisocial behavior and exhibited suspicion towards others. Children who experienced neglect (n=38) were significantly classified with anxious ambivalent attachment pattern (73.7%), and the rest of these children were classified with secure attachment (26.3%). Children from the neglected group were also at risk of feeling incompetent, exhibiting social withdrawal, and/or rejection. In the group of children who were not abused or neglected, 68.6% were classified as secure, 5.7% were classified with avoidant attachment pattern, and 25.7% were classified with anxious/ambivalent attachment pattern.

Another longitudinal study with a sample of 59 young adults (Weinfield, Sroufe & Egeland, 2000) demonstrated that insecurely attached participants were more likely to have been maltreated during childhood than those who were classified as securely attached. Additionally, participants with insecure attachment who experienced further rejection and maltreatment were less likely to form secure attachments in the future.

Attachment in Foster Care Children

The findings in a number of studies over the past two decades have indicated that foster children are at a higher risk of developing insecure attachments and behavior problems related to their attachment pattern due to experience of maltreatment, parental substance abuse, domestic violence, and frequent separations from a primary caregiver (Finzi, et al., 2001; Klassen, 2000; Reams, 1999). Foster children tend to develop disorganized attachment to insensitive and neglectful

caregivers. This puts children in foster care at risk for a number of problematic outcomes (Dozier, Stovall, Albus, & Bates, 2001).

Maltreatment and inadequate care by a caregiver is frequently linked to the development of insecure attachments in children (Schneider-Rosen, Braunwald, Carlon & Cicchetti, 1985; Spieker & Booth, 1988). Foster children may experience difficulties in forming secure attachments with new caregivers. Stovall and Dozier (1997) conducted a study with a sample of foster children (N=10); results indicated that newborns placed into care at a later age were more likely to exhibit insecure attachment behavior compared to newborns placed earlier into care.

McWey (2004) examined the attachment patterns of 110 children in foster care under the age of six and discovered that 85% of children were classified with insecure avoidant attachment pattern and 87% of these children were already taking some type of psychotropic medication. McWey suggested that these children learned to depend primarily on themselves; therefore, when new caretakers appeared in their lives they tended to view these individuals through the lens of mistrust. Consequently, they may exhibit this behaviorally by acting as though they do not need anyone's help. It is also important to note that loss of biological parents and/or siblings and the number of placements was a significant predictor of avoidant attachment pattern in this study (McWey, 2004).

In a study of children's attachment patterns in Romania (Zeanah, Smyke, Koga, & Carlson, 2005), researchers assessed attachment in a group of institutionalized children (N=95) and in the group of non-institutionalized children (N=50). Children in both groups were 12 to 31 months of age. Based on the Strange Situation

Procedure, foster children were assessed as follows: secure (18.9%), avoidant (3.2%), resistant (0%), disorganized (65.3%), and unclassifiable (12.6%). Children who were living with their biological families were classified as follows: secure (74%), avoidant (4%), resistant (0%), disorganized (22%), and unclassifiable (0%). Most children from the institutionalized group failed to display an attachment to their current caregivers during the Strange Situation Procedure. Compared to the group of children who were never institutionalized, the group of foster children exhibited more signs of Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD) for both inhibited and disinhibited types. According to DSM-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), Reactive Attachment Disorder is described as condition of “developmentally inappropriate social relatedness in most contexts, beginning before age 5 years” (p.78). It is evidenced either by individual’s markedly disturbed and developmentally inappropriate fashion to relate or respond to most social interactions or individual may exhibit nonselective sociability and excessive familiarity with relative strangers with inability to demonstrate appropriate selective attachments.

Researchers have indicated that foster children tend to regulate behavior and physiology differently compared to other children. The lack or loss of a primary caregiver and/or the experience of maltreatment by the primary caregiver may impact negatively on child’s ability to regulate stress. Considering that individuals distinctly show attachment behaviors, upon separation newborns experience elevation of cortisol levels. Overcoming a brief separation from a primary caregiver in the context of secure attachment is achievable and even expected as part of normal development. However, prolonged separation from a primary caregiver, which frequently occurs

with children in foster care, may be experienced as unmanageable (Dozier, Manni, Gordon, Peloso, Gunnar & Stovall-McClough, 2006).

Dozier, et. al. (2006) study of foster children (n=55) and a control group of children (n=104) who were living with their biological families, foster children showed atypical patterns of cortisol levels compared to a control group. Similar results were found in other studies of foster children and children living in orphanages (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2001; Gunnar, Morison, Chrisholm, & Schuder, 2001). It is also interesting to note that a subtype of maltreatment was associated with high levels of cortisol in children in the Cicchetti and Rogosch (2001) study (n=175) samples of children who were maltreated and non-maltreated children (n=209). Children who experienced both physical and sexual abuse had remarkably higher levels of cortisol than other groups (non-maltreated group, emotionally maltreated, neglected and physically abused; Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2001).

According to Bowlby (1979), children with attachment problems tend to experience difficulties relating normally with other people. Foster children often have to reconcile their grief from separation and/or loss of the family of origin and form new attachments to the people with whom they have been placed into care. Fahlberg (2012) stated that those separations which were unresolved may have a profound impact on the development of new attachments, as children may experience fear of future pain, encounter conflicted loyalties, and/or have concerns about closeness to new parents, all of which may influence the formation of new attachments.

Placing children in foster care may solve their immediate needs; however, it might not be a sufficient intervention (Fisher, Gunnar, Dozier, Bruce, & Pears, 2006).

If the foster parent is capable of providing nurturing and supportive relationships that allow the child to form secure attachment and experience adequate stress regulation, then the prognosis for this child may be good. Unfortunately, not all foster parents are capable of doing so. The lack of a nurturing and responsive caregiver who can serve as an “external extension of the child’s stress regulatory system” (p. 219) may have significantly negative long-term effects on the child.

Art Therapy

Art therapy is a mental health profession that is based on the belief that the healing power of the creative process is intrinsic and may lead to personal fulfillment, transformation, and both physical and mental health improvement (Malchiodi, 2007). In art therapy, art is used as a tool of symbolic communication in which the art product can become an expression of the patient’s emotions, issues, and conflicts. According to the American Art Therapy Association, “Art therapy is a mental health profession that uses the creative process of art-making to improve and enhance the physical, mental and emotional well-being of individuals of all ages”.

Margaret Naumburg, a founder of American art therapy, writes that it has been noticed that approaching the client through art psychotherapy enables the therapist to make progress with his or her client faster than through traditional verbal therapy. Naumburg explains that, in her experience, “number of patients who are at the beginning of art therapy treatment were blocked in speech could, after creating images of dreams and fantasies, make free associations to their pictures and become more verbally fluent during art therapy” (Naumburg, 1966, p.7).

Edith Kramer (2000), another pioneer in the field of art therapy, emphasized the

idea of art as therapy in which the process of creating art is the primary agent that provides an opportunity for the client to express his or her unconscious material through art. Additionally, Kramer suggested that creative expression can also be viewed as an integration process of conflicting feelings and primitive drives that transform through a socially acceptable manner and results in the form of art. This process in psychoanalytic theory is called sublimation. Kramer noted that this process helps the ego to obtain control and manage conflicted feelings and urges via the creative process.

Art psychotherapist, psychologist, educator and researcher Myra Levick stated that art therapy promotes the accomplishment of the following goals: provides an opportunity to strengthen the ego, allows the client to experience catharsis, facilitates the expression of anger, provides an opportunity to decrease guilt, improves impulse control, provides a new experience of expressing and integrating thoughts and feelings, and helps client to use art as new avenue for self expression (Levick, 1967 as cited in Levick, 1983).

Art therapy can be particularly effective in helping children communicate their emotions and feelings, as they may have difficulty expressing themselves verbally (Malchiodi, 1998). Additionally, art-making is usually a pleasurable and typical activity for children; it is often used as one of the main means of a child's self-expression (Golomb, 1992). It has been proposed by a number of experts that creating art can decrease a person's defenses (Wadeson, 2010). Because one's primary mode of communication is verbalization, this is most easily and commonly manipulated and censored. Art, on other hand, is a less familiar mode of

communication for most people, which allows unexpected things to be revealed via the unconscious during the creative process and may subsequently lead to increased insight, which in turn may lead to growth.

Art therapy with Foster Children

The creative process seems to be a natural activity for most children. Rubin (1987) has suggested that providing art materials during the session becomes a metaphor for nurturance, which is something that many foster children long for. To this day, there are limited numbers of research studies that explore the use of art therapy and art therapy assessment with foster children.

Gonick and Gold (1992) stated that in their experience, foster children who have broken attachments tend to display “extreme narcissistic vulnerability, a fragility and uncertainty in the sense of self” (p. 434). Furthermore, they added that the needs of these children are often not met, which frequently caused “further narcissistic injury and feelings of vulnerability” (p. 434). Gonick and Gold identified one primary issue for foster children, which is the struggle to relate to other people. From this issue the following themes emerged: safety, helplessness, shame, and hunger. When the authors asked foster children to create drawings of a house, the narratives and themes of danger frequently appeared. In addition, insecure or lack of ground lines appeared to be a common feature in their drawings. The children’s narratives often incorporated fears, disasters, vulnerability, and lack of protection along with courageous escape and victory over dangerous situations. Gonick and Gold (1992) also stated that helplessness and depression were also evident in foster children’s drawings in which the figures appeared isolated and insecure, and/or the figure lacked

interaction with the environment.

Krikorian (2008) explored the use of art therapy with foster children in her graduate thesis study. Krikorian's study was based on a single case study design in ABA format and explored the effectiveness of individual art therapy with two foster children over the course of eight weeks. In this study, both participants appeared to be disconnected from self and other people around them and drew floating figures; although through the lens of artistic development, it would have been appropriate for the figures to be grounded. The themes that Gonick and Gold (1992) identified above were also present in the artwork of both participants. Another theme that emerged in both artwork and discussions was that of isolation versus family and relationships. The findings of this research suggested that art therapy could be a more effective and appropriate intervention than verbal therapy. In addition, the results of this study suggested that art therapy may be successful in helping foster children with grounding the self and gaining a more positive concept of the self.

In another graduate thesis study, Scarborough (2009) focused on exploring four foster children's perceptions of family with the use of the Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) assessment. This was an instrumental case study design with children of 6 to 12 years of age. The findings from the study showed that a range of individuals were included as family members in the KFD. It is interesting to note that three participants included both biological and foster family member into their artwork. Children also included extended family members (e.g., their relatives' current partners, friends), which suggested that children perceived a great number of people in their lives as family. In addition, all children isolated themselves from their biological or foster

parents. The lack of interaction between other figures was also identified, and appeared to be a common characteristic across a number of other studies.

In the results of a recent graduate thesis study, Hoffman (2010) indicated that children appeared comfortable with using the metaphor of a mother and baby animal to communicate their experiences related to their personal experience with their mothers and their placements in foster care. When the questions were asked more directly, the children showed difficulty and sometimes an inability to answer. This author stated that when these questions were rephrased to be about the drawings, the children were able to express themselves at times in a more articulate manner. This suggested that direct verbal communication about personal experience may have been too overwhelming, which emphasizes the importance of using a metaphor in therapy—especially with children who are insecurely attached. In addition, Hoffman also discovered that the image of a turtle emerged in this study and suggested that it “may hold multiple applicable meanings for the insecurely attached child in foster care” (p.174). However, further research is needed to explore this archetype and how it can be used in art therapy sessions with foster care children.

Bird’s Nest Drawing

The Bird’s Nest Drawing is an art therapy assessment that Donna Kaiser (1996) developed specifically to determine an attachment pattern based on the established art indicators. Kaiser suggested that the drawing of the bird’s nest may provide emotional distance for the patient and could be less anxiety-provoking than a family drawing. The nest is believed to be a symbol of maternity, safety, and protection because it elicits the containing function and womblike form (Edinger, 1972, as cited

in Kaiser, 1996). If the tree is included in the drawing, then it may suggest another caregiving aspect as the tree is also considered as maternal symbol of nurturance in this context (Kaiser, 1996).

In the results of the master's thesis study, Sheller (2007) suggested that the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) is a valuable art therapy assessment for understanding attachment in children and their internal structures of early pre-verbal relationship experiences. All four children in this phenomenological study expressed feelings of helplessness in a dangerous world and the feeling of a lack of safety. Children also created nests that were not safe and described attachment figures as not sufficiently nurturing and protective. Sheller stated that "the use of the metaphor of a bird's nest acted as a gateway assisting children in producing illustrative artistic renderings and rich verbal descriptive associations giving meaning to experience not otherwise verbalized" (p.143). Sheller also added that this metaphor provided a chance to express the experience of relationships and danger, lack of protection, fear, and vulnerability. The study confirmed that the BND is an effective tool that can help elicit valuable information on children's experiences, feelings, and cognition in a relatively short period of time.

To date, only one BND study (Trewartha, 2004) has analyzed adolescents in foster care (N=14). In this study, most participants drew their nests floating on the page without environment or support. The findings from this study provided support for the use of stories in addition to participants' drawings. Only one participant used green color as a dominant; this graphic indicator emerged in the drawings that were assessed as secure. The artwork was created with minimal effort, a very small space

was used, there was a lack of color, and more than 70% of the participants did not include birds. Those participants who did include birds in their drawings depicted isolated baby birds, and none of the drawings had parental birds. These findings are consistent with Kaiser's (1996) findings that BND without birds may be evidence of insecure attachment.

Chapter Summary

In summarizing this chapter, children are placed into foster care system for a variety of reasons (e.g., neglect, abuse, sexual abuse, parent substance abuse, parent's inability to provide for children's fundamental needs, inadequate housing, abandonment, death of the biological parent/s).

The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) is an art therapy assessment that provides patients with emotional distance and is suggested to be less anxiety provoking than family drawing. BND can assess attachment pattern based on established graphic indicators. The results of recent master's thesis studies have concluded that BND is a valuable art therapy assessment tool that can help elicit valuable information about children's attachment patterns and provide understanding of internal structures of their early relationship experiences with caregivers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Design

This is a pilot observational study of the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) with foster care children of seven to eleven age range who have been in at least two foster care placements. The quantitative part of the study was to assess children attachment based on the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Kaiser, & Furman, 2011). The qualitative part of the study was an interview where questions regarding the content of the drawing were asked. Children were also asked to create a story about their drawing. In the case of the child did not spontaneously introduce an event that may have happened to the nest then he/she were asked to imagine an event and describe what it might be.

Specific attachment patterns have implications for both psychopathology and normal development. Persons with insecure attachment patterns are more predisposed to social dysfunction and mental health issues, which may impact their daily life and relationships with others. The rationale for this study was that the BND may be an effective art therapy assessment to assess an attachment pattern in foster care children. Furthermore, it was theorized that this study will advance the literature on understanding of the experience of attachment in foster care children and inform their appropriate treatment.

Location of the Study

This study was conducted in a private room at the foster care agency that is providing services in the greater Philadelphia area. These services include:

- Adoption services to assist prospective adoptive parents with their adoption process.
- Foster Care Services, which include placement into approved foster home and ensures the provision of 24-hour care.
- Treatment Foster Care to ensure that children with mental health needs are receiving appropriate care.
- Medical Foster Care to provide care for children who are at risk medically, including children with terminal and life-threatening illnesses.
- Supervised Independent Living to provide assistance to young adults aged 17 to 21 that includes providing youth with their own apartments, weekly visits by social workers, help with job placements, and regular social skills classes.

Time Period

The study began following approval of Drexel University Institutional Review Board. The time period was from February 2012 to February 2013.

Enrollment Information

The study was expected to have ten participants who were currently receiving services from the selected agency, however only three went through the recruitment process. Both males and females ranging from seven to eleven years of age were recruited. Representatives from different racial, ethnic and socio-economic categories were eligible and considering the urban population being served at the selected agency, African-American children from low-income homes were anticipated. To participate in this study children were expected to have a history of at least two foster home placements in view of the fact that foster children often experience multiple

placements, which often tends to create an obstacle to forming secure attachment with a primary caregiver. Younger children were excluded because they may not have the cognitive abilities to verbally communicate their ideas and thoughts during the interview part of this study. Adolescents were excluded from this study due to additional set of social and developmental factors which arise at this stage of development and which were not the focus of this research. Children who were wards of the state were also excluded from this study because obtaining permission is a complicated procedure that could have negatively affect the time period established for this study.

Participant Type

Participants were all children from foster care families who at the moment of the study were receiving services from the selected agency and who were recruited on a voluntary basis. The participants were from the same foster care agency and had a history of two or more foster care placements. The first ten children who would meet inclusion and exclusion criteria and signed an assent form and whose parents/legal guardians sign the consent form would have been accepted into this study. However, due complication in the recruitment process only three children were enrolled.

Participant Source

The participants came from the Greater Philadelphia region and they were clients of the selected foster care agency located in Glenside, PA.

Recruitment

A list of children who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria has been compiled by the case workers at the selected agency. Recruitment letters (Appendix

A, p. 92) and flyers (Appendix B, p. 93) with a description of the study were mailed to parents/legal guardians whose children met inclusion/exclusion criteria inviting them to participate in the study. Parents/legal guardians who were interested in enrolling their child in this study contacted the researcher via telephone that was provided on the cover letter and the flyer. During the initial phone conversation the researcher scheduled an appointment to meet with parent/legal guardian individually to discuss the purpose and procedures of the study. Parents/legal guardians were informed that this is a voluntary study and the services that their child is receiving from the selected agency will remain the same regardless of their child's participation. If during this meeting parent/legal guardian agreed to have their child participate in the study then two consent forms were signed. The first ten participants who met the inclusion criteria, along with their parent/legal guardian, and who would complete consent/assent forms would have been accepted into the study however, due to complication in recruitment process only three children participated in this study.

Participant's foster parent were informed regarding the study. Although foster parents provide care for foster children they have no legal authority over them therefore their consent was not required.

Participant Inclusion Criteria

In order to participate in the study each participant had to meet the following criteria:

1. The child is currently receiving the foster care services from the selected agency.
2. The child's age is ranging from 7 to 11 years.

3. The child has not been diagnosed with a cognitive disability.
4. The child placed into foster family with caretaker who is not a relative.
5. The child must have a history of at least two foster home placements.

Participant Exclusion Criteria

1. The child who is a ward of the state.
2. The child who is younger or older than seven to eleven years of age.
3. The child has been diagnosed with a cognitive disability.
4. The child is placed with a caretaker who is a relative.
5. The child has been placed in less than two foster home placements.

Investigational Methods and Procedures

Instrumentation

The Bird's Nest Drawing (50 minutes)

The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) elicits valuable clinical information about patient's attachment security, which is useful in treatment planning and the development of therapeutic relationship (Kaiser & Deaver, 2009). Unlike a family drawing, which may be an anxiety provoking task for some individuals (Kwiatkowska, 1978), the BND is considered to be a projective drawing task that may be less threatening to the individual. It was suggested by Kaiser that the BND provides an opportunity to have the emotional distance and allows individuals to project attachment related themes by portraying them in the image of the bird's nest (Kaiser, 1996). Kaiser's original norming population was adults with substance abuse issues.

This study incorporated the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, et al., 2011). In the initial BND research study Kaiser (1996) used a checklist with presence or absence of nine art indicators in bird's nest drawings that were hypothesized to indicate attachment pattern. Based on that checklist the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories was developed. This manual incorporates examples of the art indicators and content, eleven category rating scale for children's BND and stories. However, inter-rater reliability is currently being investigated with the research that is in process.

In this study each child was asked to draw a bird's nest. After completing the drawing the child was asked questions related to the content of the drawing. In addition, child was asked to tell a story about the nest. If child did not introduce the event that may have happened with the nest then the researcher asked the child to imagine and describe an event that may have happened.

Informed Consent

Parent/legal guardian consent (30 minutes)

A meeting with each child's parent/legal guardian was scheduled to take place in a private room at the selected agency in order to explain important details of the study via the informed consent and have two copies signed. During this meeting parent/legal guardian were assured of confidentiality and that the services received from the agency will remain the same despite the participation or refusal to participate in this study. After the parent/legal guardian has read and restated in his or her own words their understanding of his/her child's participation in the study, two consent forms were signed (Appendix C, p. 94). One consent form was given to the

legal guardian and the second form was stored and locked in the Creative Arts in Therapy Program office at Drexel University.

Child Assent

The child's foster parent was contacted to schedule a time for the child to meet with the researcher. After discussing the purpose of this study and its confidentiality the child was asked to repeat it in his/her own words the understanding of the study and whether he/she is willing to participate. If the child agreed to participate he/she was asked to sign two copies of the assent form (Appendix D, p. 98). A copy of this form is kept in a secure and locked file in the Creative Arts in Therapy Program offices at Drexel University. Another copy is kept in the child's record in a secure and locked file at the selected agency. Data collection was started once the child's assent form was attained.

Data Collection

The child was invited into a private room at the selected agency. At this time the child was reminded of confidentiality and that the procedure will be audio-taped.

1. Data Collection One – Art Process (20 minutes).

Art supplies available to the child included: 8 ½ X 11" sheet of white paper, a pencil with eraser, and a pack of eight thin-line markers. The participant was asked to draw a bird's nest.

2. Data Collection Two – Interview related to the art making experience and storytelling (20-30 minutes).

After the task was completed the child was asked questions about the use of space, omissions, imagery, use of color and the content of the drawing. Considering

that each drawing was unique the questions varied from child to child. The child was also asked to tell a story about the nest. If an event was not introduced by the child then the researcher asked the following question stated in a neutral tone of voice: “Imagine that something happened to the nest. Can you tell me what it was?” The data was audio recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis

Children’s drawings were rated using the Manual for the Children’s Bird’s Nest Drawing and Stories (Gonzales, et al., 2011). Two professional and registered art therapists (ATR) blinded to the nature of this study reviewed and rated the artwork and the stories using the rating scale (Appendix E, p. 99). ATR outside raters were used to insure at least two years of experience in the field. The stories told by the children also were analyzed by identifying common themes.

Possible Risks and Discomforts to Participants

Although the study was expected to be of minor risk there may have been some anxiety or/and psychological discomfort. Children may also responded in the way that they think was most expected or wanted from them, may felt uncomfortable drawing in the presence of the researcher and/or may have been afraid to be judged for their drawing skills.

Special Precautions to Minimizing or Hazards

To minimize anxiety and/or psychological discomfort and make children feel more comfortable, the procedure took place in a private room of the selected agency, which is a familiar setting to the children. Foster care children often receive treatment for their mental and behavioral problems therefore they are used to talking with

caseworkers, therapists and other clinical workers. Each child was told that everything that they say will remain confidential and that they are not being judged on their artistic abilities. Because to children aged seven to eleven the art making process is a normal and typical activity, this is usually a comfortable experience.

In the case of the unlikely event that a child became distressed, he/she may also have been referred to their case worker for support. The session would have been terminated and the researcher would then contact the child's foster parent. If unforeseen risks were seen, they would have been reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at (215) 255-7857, Dr. Elizabeth Hartzell at (215) 762-3767.

Operational Definition of Terms, Concepts, Variables

Attachment

The process through which one develops emotional bonds with others, which serves to seek proximity to and contact with specific figures in a continued relationship and especially when one is frightened, tired or ill (Bowlby, 1988).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Overview

The major findings of this observational study are presented in this chapter. The Bird's Nest Drawing art therapy assessment was administered in order to assess the children's attachment pattern and better understand their internalized attachment security. The data presented in this chapter was rated by two professional and registered art therapists (ATR) blinded to the nature of this study and scored using the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Kaiser, & Furman, 2011). The scores range from 1 to 2 where a lower score (1 – 1.5) indicates insecure attachment and a higher score (1.6 – 2) indicates secure attachment.

The researcher looked at each child's overall score determined by the average of yes/no answers across 11 questions organized into 4 main categories: drawing developmental stage, drawing formal qualities, drawing content and story content. The researcher also looked at each category score across raters in order to analyze individual determinants. The results showed low inter rater reliability.

All names have been changed in order to protect the identity of the participants in this study. Each participant is discussed separately starting with Participant 1, Participant 2 and then Participant 3. Each participant's case summary also includes a brief history of the child, the child's verbal responses to the interview questions, and color images of the artwork.

Participant # 1: Keisha

Keisha was a nine-year-old African American female. Keisha was placed in foster care due to parental abuse. At the time of this study, Keisha had been in foster

care for three and a half years and this was her third placement. During the data collection, Keisha presented as a quiet and shy child. Keisha began to draw promptly after given the instruction for the Bird's Nest Drawing. She worked quietly on her drawing and completed it within eight minutes saying that she was done. During the interview, Keisha gave brief answers and spoke very quietly and hesitantly and as the interview progressed Keisha provided a bit more spontaneous answers and appeared to be more comfortable. However, throughout the interview Keisha required prompting, as she often would pause for long periods. When the session was completed, Keisha chose to take the drawing with her.

Interview questions and participant's responses

1. Researcher: Can you tell me about this drawing?
 Keisha: It is a nest made with wood on it.
 Researcher: Can you tell me where it is?
 Keisha: It is in the wood with lots of trees.
 Researcher: Do you know who build this nest?
 Keisha: A bird.
 Researcher: Can you tell me about that bird?
 Keisha: He is black and he is nice.

2. Researcher: Let's try to come up with a story about your drawing, okay?
 Keisha: Bird's nest was on the tree. Then it got cold and wind started to blow and the nest fell down on the ground.
 Researcher: What happened with the bird?
 Keisha: The bird wasn't in it. He flew somewhere to find food. He came back to the nest and he did not find his nest so decided to build another one.
 Researcher: How is he going to do that?
 Keisha: He will do it by himself.
 Researcher: Sounds like he is a strong little bird.
 Keisha: Yes, and he has friends who will help him.
 Researcher: What about his family?
 Keisha: He does not have a family.
 Researcher: What happened to his family?
 Keisha: I have no idea.
 Researcher: Alright. So the bird will build a new nest and his friends are going to help him. Can you tell me more about it?

Keisha: Yes, his friends helped him to find all kinds of things to help make the nest stronger. And then the wind will blow again and when it stopped the nest will still be on the tree and it made the bird happy.

Researcher: So is it a stronger nest?

Keisha: Yes.

3. Researcher: So this nest that you drew, where is it in your story?

Keisha: It's the first nest and it's still on a tree. The bird flew away and he is not here. But he is flying back. He was where a lot of worms were. He came back and could not find his nest so he decided to build another one.

Researcher: What about this nest? Do you think this nest is safe?

Keisha: I don't know... Probably the nest is not strong enough because the wind blew it away. The little bird learned that the nest was not strong enough so he decided to build a stronger nest so it could stand up to a strong wind.

Figure 1. Participant #1, Keisha, thin-line markers, 8 ½ X 11" white paper



Table 1

Score results for Participant #1: Keisha

Rating Category	Total Average
Drawing - Developmental Stage	1.3
Drawing - Formal Qualities	1.15
Drawing – Content	1.15
Story – Content	1.5
Overall Score	1.27

Analysis of Results

Overall total score for Keisha was 1.27, which indicates insecure attachment. Keisha's highest score of 1.5 was on the category of Story Content. On Drawing Developmental Stage Keisha received a score of 1.3 and for both, Drawing Formal Qualities and Content Keisha received 1.15. The raters did agree on two categories: Drawing Formal Qualities and Drawing Content. On the Drawing Formal Qualities rater one assessed that the drawing was free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements. Rater two assessed that it was not free of those elements. On the Drawing Content rater one assessed that the drawing was realistic while rater two rated it is as not realistic.

Drawing - Developmental Stage

Both raters were in agreement that child's drawing (Figure 1, p. 44) did not show details that would serve as beneficial information to indicate appropriate developmental stage of the child. According to the Rating Manual "if the drawing includes 3 or more of the following: a nest with eggs, birds/bird families, leaves/branches on trees, weather is indicated... and if the textures of the objects are included" then the drawing may provide information that can be used to determine whether the drawing reflects appropriate developmental stage of the child.

There was also lack of spatial organization because there was no ground line. However, both raters were in agreement that the artwork is realistic and the use of color was age-appropriate. In order to meet this criterion, the artwork must show realistic, age appropriate use of color and shading, mixing of colors and different hues may also be present (Gonzales, et al., 2011).

Drawing - Formal Elements

Both raters agreed that this drawing was not well organized as according to the Rating Manual. The composition of the drawing was not full and balanced and less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the paper was utilized. According to rater one the drawing was free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements. The second rater rated this drawing as not free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements, which may be explained that it is due to the fact that only one nest is represented and other objects (i.e. eggs, tree, and birds) are omitted. The difference in rating suggests that raters understood this part of the rating scale differently. However, both raters agreed that the line quality in the drawing was controlled, fluid and varied.

Drawing - Content

Both raters were in agreement that the drawing did not contain a tree, eggs, or parent bird and baby bird as there was only a drawing of the nest. However, this nest was floating in the air because there was no tree branch or horizontal line to indicate some type of surface on which the nest was located. Both raters rated that this nest was not well supported. One rater indicated that that the drawing was realistic and the second rater rated it was not realistic. This difference in rating may have occurred because the raters understood this part of the rating scale differently. According to the Rating Manual the drawing qualifies as realistic if there are no “bizarre, disorganized, incoherent, unrelated, or unusual elements or approaches to the drawing” (p. 3, Gonzales, et al., 2011).

Story - Content

Both raters rated that the overall theme of the story as negative. In order to meet this criteria the story has to contain negative themes such as “abandonment, danger, failed protection, fear, helplessness, isolation, or vulnerability” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011). Both raters also agreed that the story was coherent and appropriate in length. According to the Rating Manual the story is viewed to be incoherent if it is unrelated to the drawing, unnecessarily vague, meandering/rambling or if it is a literal description of the artwork.

Participant # 2: Isaiah

Isaiah was an eleven-year-old African American male who has been placed into foster care because of parental substance abuse and physical abuse. Isaiah had been in foster care for two years at time of participation in this study. Prior to his current placement, Isaiah had lived with three foster care families.

When given the instruction Isaiah began to draw slowly. He did not make any eye contact, was silent and worked very quietly on his drawing. In the beginning of the interview Isaiah appeared reserved but as the interview progressed he appeared to be more comfortable with the researcher. When the interview was over Isaiah told the researcher that she could keep the drawing because he did not want it.

Interview Questions and Participant's Responses

1. Researcher: Can you tell more about this nest?
 Isaiah: There is a mama bird and father bird live there. Also an egg.
 Researcher: Where are they right now?
 Isaiah: The egg hatched so they are somewhere teaching the baby bird how to fly.
 Researcher: Can you tell me more about the parents and the baby bird?
 Isaiah: They feed the baby bird and protect it. They are making sure it's okay.

2. Researcher: Imagine that something happened to the nest. Can you tell me what it was?
Isaiah: Eagle destroyed it.
Researcher: Can you tell me a story about it?
Isaiah: The birds were at home and they eagle started to attack the nest. The birds escaped but the eagle knocked down the nest and it fell apart.
3. Researcher: So you said they found another home.
Isaiah: Yes, they built a nest on the back of somebody's house because it was safer to stay closer to other people.
Researcher: What makes it more safe?
Isaiah: Well, no, it's not safe actually.
Researcher: Tell me more about it.
Isaiah: Well, the eagle can find them there too and they can get trapped in that house and they may not be able to escape this time.
Researcher: Is there something about that house?
Isaiah: No. It was probably not a really good choice to built another nest on the back of someone's house.
Researcher: Where do you think it would be more safe?
Isaiah: On the tree that's in the graveyard.
Researcher: Graveyard?
Isaiah: Yes, the cemetery.
Researcher: What makes that place safer?
Isaiah: All the birds will be there with them and they will be able to help them escape if the eagle will attack the family again.
4. Researcher: so what happened next?
Isaiah: They decided to move again. But once the baby bird grew up he decided to talk to the eagle and the eagle was really angry about something. But the baby bird was able to help the eagle solve his problem and helped him to feel better because he was bigger now and knew what to say. They became friends with all the birds.
Researcher: So the baby bird saved the family?
Isaiah: Yes. That's how the story ended.
Researcher: That sounds like a very positive ending of the story.
Isaiah: Yes, I just wish the baby bird could have talked to the eagle the first time when they met so he wouldn't destroy the first nest.
Researcher: Do you think he could have done it even though he was just a baby back then?
Isaiah: Yes. But he didn't do anything.
Researcher: Do you think the eagle would have listened to the baby bird back then?
Isaiah: Yes...
Researcher: What would he say?
Isaiah: He would say "It's going to be okay, you don't have to take out all your pain on everything you see." The baby bird would have helped the eagle to feel

happy and the baby bird would have felt great that he helped his family and saved the nest.

Researcher: What do you think the eagle felt angry about?

Isaiah: I don't know. Something happened to him and it made him to take his anger out on another family.

Figure 2. Participant #2, Isaiah, thin-line markers, 8 ½ X 11" white paper



Table 2

Score results for Participant # 2: Isaiah

Rating Category	Total Average
Drawing - Developmental Stage	1
Drawing - Formal Qualities	1.15
Drawing – Content	1
Story – Content	1.25
Overall Score	1.1

Analysis of Results

Isaiah's overall total score was 1.1, which indicates insecure attachment. For both, Drawing Developmental Stage and Drawing Content Isaiah received a score of 1. For Drawing Formal Qualities Isaiah received 1.15. Total score for Story Content is 1.25, which was the highest score across all the categories. The raters were not in agreement on two categories, Drawing Formal Qualities and Story Content. On the Drawing Formal Qualities rater one assessed that the drawing is free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements. Rater two assessed that it was not free of those elements. On Story Content category rater one assessed that Isaiah's story was coherent and appropriate in length while rater two assessed that it was not coherent and appropriate in length.

Drawing - Developmental Stage

Both raters were in agreement that the drawing (Figure 2, p. 51) did not show the detail that would indicate the developmental stage of this child. According to the Rating Manual there should be three or more objects (i.e., nest, eggs, birds, etc.) in order to provide more information to determine if the drawing shows detail that is appropriate to child's stage of development.

In viewing whether the drawing was spatially organized both raters agreed that it was not spatially organized. There were no ground/horizon line and the drawing of the nest was floating in the air. Both raters were in agreement that the drawing did not show realistic and age-appropriate use of color and there was only one color used.

Drawing - Formal Elements

Both raters agreed that the drawing was not well organized as less than $\frac{3}{4}$ page was used, there was a floating object and the drawing was not full and balanced. Rater one assessed that the drawing was free of omissions while the second rater indicated that the drawing was not free of omissions. According to the manual, the drawing is rated as not free of omissions if the bird's nest was omitted, there are objects that are uncompleted, there are excessive erasures or drawings contains elements that are crossed out (Gonzales, et al., 2011).

In assessing if the line quality was controlled, fluid and varied, both of the raters rated that lines were “broken, sketchy, scribbled, multidirectional or excessively heavy” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011). In the original artwork Isaiah applied a lot of marker strokes in certain areas of the nest, which somewhat deteriorated the paper.

Drawing – Content

The drawing had a nest; however it did not include eggs, parent bird, baby birds, or a tree. In addition, the nest did not appear to be supported and was floating in the air, about which both raters were in agreement. Both raters also were in agreement that the drawing was not realistic. According to the Rating Manual, if “bizarre, disorganized, incoherent, unrelated, or unusual elements or approaches to the drawing” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011) are present then it should to be rated as not realistic.

Story - Content

Both raters assessed that the story theme was not positive. According to the Rating Manual this indicates that the “negative themes such as abandonment, danger, failed protection, fear, helplessness, isolation, or vulnerability are present” (p.4). Rater one assessed that the story was coherent and appropriate in length and second rater assessed that it was not. The Rating Manual states that the story must be “unrelated to the drawing, excessively vague or meandering/rambling, or a literal description of the drawing” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011) for it to be rated as not coherent or inappropriate in length.

Participant # 3: Tamia

Tamia was an eight-year-old African American female who was placed into foster care because of parental substance abuse issues and neglect. Tamia had been in foster care for three years at the time of inclusion in the study and had been previously placed in two foster homes. Current placement was her third foster home.

Tamia appeared very friendly and began to draw immediately after being given the instructions for the Bird’s Nest Drawing. Tamia looked at all the markers and appeared purposeful in selecting the colors she wanted to use in her drawing. She first drew the weather and then proceeded to the tree and the nest on top of it. Occasionally she asked the researcher about the colors that she should use and was reminded that it was up to her. She also drew the weather, starting with the sun and then added clouds, thunder and rain. Tamia paused for a minute and then added that it looks confusing now with the shining sun and what appears to be a thunderstorm happening at the same time.

During the interview Tamia was open to answering the researcher's questions and added more details to the drawing as she spoke. She added the words and four arrows pointing at the tree trunk to explain what was going on in the drawing. Tamia appeared to be highly energetic and talked with excitement.

Interview Questions and Participant's Responses

1. Researcher: Can you tell me about what you just added to your drawing?
 Tamia: It's a thunderstorm and there is a sun... Should I really have a sun right now?
 Researcher: It's up to you.
 Tamia: Oh well, there is a sun but the thunderstorm came and the sun is about to go down. So it's like a yellow sun, then it's all sparkly and everything but then the clouds start to Boom! Boom! And then it's like Woom! Woom! And all these drops, tears come down. Right? But the bird is gonna need to do something. She's gonna find a new home. A nice home but she may be gonna need a little time here. She will go under the tree branches and find a little tunnel right here, under her babies. So she like go right here or right here and there will be like a little thing inside. Like right here... but right here and right here she can fly in...
 Researcher: So those are the places where she can enter the tunnel?
 Tamia: Yeah! ...but she can't go further down here because it will get flooded. Because you know how the rain goes like this? So the bird knows that if you don't go up, up... because it will flood. Because then... yeah...
 Researcher: Yeah what?
 Tamia: They'll die... they will try to rescue them but no... because you know the water will be right here...

2. Researcher: Okay, so since you mentioned the mama bird could you please tell me about her? Where is she going now?
 Tamia: Yes, she is just trying to find a home.
 Researcher: So she is leaving her nest?
 Tamia: Yeah.
 Researcher: Do you think it's safe to leave her children in the nest right now?
 Tamia: No!
 Researcher: Then why is she leaving?
 Tamia: She needs a safe place. Like I saw a lot of birds in the rain time. Like they fly away and find a home.
 Researcher: Okay. So what about the baby birds? Are they still in the eggs? Do they know what's going on?
 Tamia: They are still inside. They don't know what's going on. But she tells the babies "I will miss you."
 Researcher: "I will miss you" okay...
 Tamia: But she comes home later... she won't be away too long.

Researcher: oh, so she is going to be back soon?

Tamia: Yes, like in 0.01 minute... see?

Researcher: Okay, so is there a dad?

Tamia: No, no dad, that's like my story...

Researcher: Your story? That's very interesting...

Tamia: Don't want to talk about my story...

3. Researcher: So the nest will become muddy?

Tamia: Yes!

Researcher: And what would mama bird do about it?

Tamia: She leave and then will come back but then she will say "where are my eggs?" Her babies decided to fly away to find her...

Researcher: Did they hatch while mama bird was away?

Tamia: Yeah.

Researcher: Did they fly into the storm?

Tamia: No, not really. The storm has ended when she left and then she didn't come back for like to two days although she said she will be back in 0.01 minute... and the eggs hatched and mama bird wasn't there... baby birds started to look for their mommy so they decided to fly away to look for her. The big one, the orange one... this one, said "we will find our mom"... She was the first one to hatch. So there was the second one to hatch and then there was a third one to hatch...

Researcher: So they hatched without mama bird being there?

Tamia: Yes and they went all around the world to look for mom but in two days the mama bird came back and she said "where are my eggs?"

Researcher: So the bird's nest was empty?

Tamia: Yep! And they flew away... So then the bird flew away again, like she did this back and forth thing, you know? Like when she was gone the baby birds came back and didn't find her... then the babies left and she came back and they were not there... then she left and came back and the babies came back again so they all were there together!

Researcher: So they finally met!

Tamia: Yes! And then the babies were there and the mama bird was there and they had a big hug like this!

4. Researcher: Is there anything you would change about this drawing?

Tamia: I wish there were no thunderstorms...

Researcher: You wish there were no thunderstorms...

Tamia: Yeah... are we done with this? I just want to play now.

Figure 3. Participant #2, Tamia, thin-line markers, 8 ½ X 11" white paper



Table 3

Score results for Participant # 3: Tamia

Rating Category	Total Average
Drawing - Developmental Stage	1.8
Drawing - Formal Qualities	1.45
Drawing – Content	1.3
Story – Content	1
Overall Score	1.38

Analysis of Results

Tamia's overall total score was 1.38, which indicates insecure attachment. On Drawing Developmental Stage Tamia received a 1.8, which was the highest score not only among the four categories in this rating scale but also the highest score among all participants. For Drawing Formal Qualities category Tamia received the score of 1.45 and on Drawing Content Tamia received 1.3. Total score for Story Content was 1, which was the lowest score across four categories and among all the participants. The raters were not in agreement on two categories, Drawing Developmental Stage and Drawing Formal Qualities. On the Drawing Developmental Stage rater one assessed that the drawing was not spatially organized while rater two assessed that it was spatially organized. On Drawing Formal Qualities rater one assessed that Tamia's drawing has line quality that was not controlled, fluid and varied while rater two assessed that the line quality was controlled, fluid and varied.

Drawing - Developmental Stage

Both raters were in agreement that this drawing (Figure 3, p.58) shows detail that was appropriate to the developmental stage of this child. There was a tree, a nest with bird family, the sun, clouds and rain that indicated the weather. Rater one assessed that the drawing was not spatially organized while rater two assessed that it was spatially organized. According to the Rating Manual, in order to be rated as spatially organized a ground line and one spatial point need to be present (Gonzales, et al., 2011). Both raters rated that the drawing showed realistic, age-appropriate use of color.

Drawing - Formal Elements

The drawing was assessed as well organized by both of the raters. According to the Rating Manual the drawing is well organized “if the composition of the drawing is full, balanced, and appropriate” (p.3), which means that more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the paper is used. Both raters were in agreement that the drawing was not free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements. The Rating Manual states that “if the bird’s nest is omitted, if there are excessive erasures, elements are crossed out, unfinished objects, restarts or significant elements drawn larger than necessary or that are off the paper edge, choose no” (p.3). Rater one assessed that the line quality in the drawing was not controlled, fluid and varied while second raters assessed that the line quality was controlled, fluid and varied. The Rating Manual instructs that “if more than 50% of the drawing contains lines that are broken, sketchy, scribbled, multi-directional, or excessively heavy or light, choose no” (p.3, Gonzales, et al., 2011).

Drawing – Content

Both raters assessed that the drawing had a nest, eggs, parent bird, tree, etc. Both raters rated that the nest was not well supported, as in the drawing there was no tree branch that would support the nest. Instead it was drawn in the middle of the treetop. Also both raters were in agreement that the drawing was not realistic. According to the Rating Manual this indicate that “there are bizarre, disorganized, incoherent, unrelated, or unusual elements or approaches to the drawing” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011).

Story – Content

Both raters agreed that the overall theme of the story was not positive, which means that there were negative themes that include abandonment, threat, helplessness, vulnerability, etc. The story was also rated as incoherent and not appropriate in length by both of the raters. According to the Rating Manual, in order to meet this criteria the story has to be “unrelated to the drawing, excessively vague or meandering/rambling, or a literal description of the drawing” (p.4, Gonzales, et al., 2011).

Table 4

Score results for all three participants

Rating Category	Participant # 1	Participant # 2	Participant # 3	Average across the participants
Drawing - Developmental Stage	1.3	1	1.8	1.36
Drawing - Formal Qualities	1.15	1.15	1.45	1.25
Drawing – Content	1.15	1	1.3	1.15
Story – Content	1.5	1.25	1	1.25
Overall Score	1.27	1.1	1.38	1.25

Composite of All Three Children

Drawing – Developmental Stage

In the category of Drawing – Developmental Stage, Keisha (Participant # 1) received a score of 1.3 and Isaiah (Participant # 2) received a score of 1, which was the lowest score in the sample. Tamia (Participant # 3) received a score of 1.8, which was the highest score among three participants (Table 4, p. 61). As mentioned previously a score between 1.6 and - 2 is classified as secure attachment, which indicates that among the three children only Tamia, for whom the Drawing – Developmental Stage was the strongest area, received a score that is considered secure. The average number for all three participants in this category was 1.36, which was the highest number among all four categories.

Drawing – Formal Elements

Both Keisha and Isaiah received a score of 1.15 while Tamia scored 1.45 in the category of Drawing – Formal Qualities. Although Tamia's score was the highest among the three children and indicates more strength in this area, it was still considered insecure as it was below 1.6. The average across all three participants in this category was 1.25.

Drawing – Content

Keisha received a score of 1.15 in this category. Isaiah scored 1, which was the lowest between the three children in this category. Tamia received a score of 1.3 in this category, which once again was the highest score among the three children yet was still considered insecure. The average number for all three participants in this category was 1.15, which was the lowest score among all four categories.

Story – Content

Keisha received a score of 1.5, which was the highest score among the three children in the category of Story – Content. Isaiah received a score of 1.25, which was his highest score across all four categories. Tamia received a score of 1, which was the lowest score among all three children as well as the lowest across all four categories for her individually. The average score for the participants in this category was 1.25.

Summary

As stated previously, a score between 1 and 1.5 is considered insecure attachment and a score between 1.6 and 2 indicates secure attachment. All of the children created drawings whose qualities indicated insecure attachment as their overall scores were below 1.5. The overall scores for each child were as follows: Keisha received 1.27, Isaiah received 1.1 and Tamia received 1.38.

Data analyses also indicated the following themes that have emerged in children's stories:

- Isolation
- Fear
- Vulnerability
- Lack of protection
- Threat to the wellbeing of the bird/s living in the nest
- Loss of the home/bird's nest
- Positive outcomes

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to assess attachment in foster children using the Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) art therapy assessment via the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Kaiser, & Furman, 2011). The objective of this study was to gain a better understanding of how participants express attachment security via the metaphor of the bird's nest. Children in foster care experience separation from their family of origin. This can have a profound effect on the child's development leading to feelings of abandonment, anger, helplessness, self-blame, and mistrust. Many foster children experience maltreatment from a caregiver, which may affect the development of their attachment. The results of numerous research studies have indicated that foster children have a high risk of developing insecure attachment patterns. This insecure attachment can lead to difficulties relating to others and maintaining healthy relationships. In addition, researchers have shown a higher instance of behavioral and cognitive problems among children in foster care compared to children not in foster care. Assessing and understanding attachment in foster children through the BND assessment may help art therapists and other mental health professionals to provide more effective and appropriate treatment.

This chapter will discuss the major findings, themes, and outcomes of this study. It will also include possible clinical implications of the findings, address the limitations and delimitations of the study, and make suggestions for future research.

Major Findings, Themes, and Outcomes

The researcher attempted to assess and understand foster children's attachment to the primary caregiver. All children who participated in this study were assessed through the BND as insecurely attached. Isaiah (Participant # 2) was assessed as most insecure among the three participants, and Tamia (Participant # 3) was assessed as least insecure with an overall score of 1.38, the highest in this sample.

The Bird's Nest

The Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) may serve as an unconscious metaphor for the individual's perception of his home and family. Kaiser (1996) suggested that this assessment may provide emotional distance, and thus it would be considered to be less anxiety provoking compared to a family drawing and Kwiatkowska suggests that the directive to draw your family may be an anxiety provoking art therapy assessment (1978). Children who participated in this study appeared to be comfortable with a directive of the BND, which is consistent with Kaiser's (1996) statement that the BND task is often perceived as "an innocent and non-threatening directive" (p.334).

Keisha (Participant #1) and Isaiah (Participant #2) each depicted only an empty nest and in both drawings only one color was used. The bird's nest images appeared isolated from the environment and parent birds were omitted. It is also important to note that while working on his nest, Isaiah applied multidirectional and excessively heavy lines with the marker, which began to wear through the paper. This kind of perseveration may indicate an expression of anxiety and/or preoccupation with internal conflict.

Birds and Eggs

In Trewartha's (2004) study of adolescents in foster care system, 71% of the drawings in the sample did not contain birds, which is similar to two children mentioned earlier, Keisha and Isaiah, who did not include birds in their drawings. Parent birds are usually viewed as the caretakers of the nest and those who live in it. Kaiser (1996) stated that omission of the environment and parent birds suggests that it may be a depiction of an unconscious perception of the experience with the primary caregiver who may have been emotionally unavailable or uninvolved. Both Keisha and Isaiah excluded the parent birds, suggesting a lack of investment in the bird family or avoidance of attachment concerns. This may relate to or have connection to the children's own parents. Although Tamia depicted a mother bird in her drawing, it is important to note that this bird left her eggs in the middle of a thunderstorm, which, according to Tamia, was not safe. Although the bird's nest is not a family drawing, it may be a metaphor for home and family. Similar to the BND, Di Leo (1983) suggested that children who had traumatic experiences and/or came from a "broken home" often excluded their parents from the family drawing. This finding is consistent with Scarborough's (2009) master thesis on foster children where three out of four participants excluded their biological parents in their family drawings.

In her study on the BND, Kaiser (1996) suggested that women who excluded birds (i.e., parent and/or baby birds) "may be unconsciously expressing lack of support from significant others." In Keisha's case, she excluded parents from both the drawing and the story, and when the researcher asked her specifically if the bird had a family she replied "no." In addition, she mentioned that the bird only had friends. In

Tamia's case, only the mother bird was present. When the researcher inquired about the father bird, the child replied "no, no dad...." After a small pause, Tamia stated further, "it's like my story." Tamia broke from the metaphor and appeared uncomfortable with her comment and quickly added "I don't want to talk about my story." Tamia's verbal and non-verbal response to her own words clearly indicated that she was not comfortable talking about her own story directly and immediately switched back to the metaphor of the BND. With apparent relief, Tamia then continued telling the researcher the story about the mother bird who left the nest.

In her drawing, Tamia depicted a nest with eggs and a mother bird saying that the mother would be right back, but ended up being gone for a few days. The researcher asked the child if it was safe to leave the nest at the moment, and child exclaimed "No!" Tamia explained that mother bird was trying to find a safe place; however, while the mother bird was gone, her eggs hatched, which may signify that the mother bird missed an important stage of her babies' development. This may be a connection to how the child perceived the absence of the parent when she was moved to foster placement.

Environment

In this study two participants, Keisha and Isaiah, omitted an environment. However, Tamia depicted the environment and incorporated weather in her drawing. A thunderstorm in her drawing was depicted as a threat to the family because, as the child stated, it would ruin the nest. Tamia depicted both thunderstorm and the sun, which later confused her because she realized they should not be depicted together and confessed she was confused by it. However, the dual weathers appear to reflect

that Tamia experienced ambivalent feelings and that she attempted to depict many ideas at the same time. This is also evident in other details of the drawing like the arrows and words that she added as she described her artwork.

In Trewartha's (2004) study of adolescents in foster care, only one out of fourteen drawings depicted an environment. Kaiser (1996) also suggested that nests that appear isolated, lacking color and supporting environment, may be an unconscious representation of the experiences with a primary caregiver early in life. The individuals who created such drawings may be experiencing a lack of security in their internalized schemes of attachment, which they play out in current close relationships.

A child needs a caregiver who will provide protection, security, and a secure base from which he/she can safely explore the environment (Bowlby, 1988). If a caregiver is responsive, sensitive, and attuned to the child, providing a sense of security, it allows the child to feel free to explore the environment and have a safe place to return to the caregiver in case of stress or threat, knowing that he/she will be welcomed and soothed. If a caregiver is inconsistent and unpredictable but yet attentive, then exploration of the environment is limited. When a caregiver is frightening or abusive, then a child cannot use a caregiver for safety while exploring the environment, which often results in an insecure attachment pattern. Therefore, it is suggested that the lack of environment in children's drawings may reflect their early experience of an inability or lack of opportunity to explore the world safely using a secure base. Since there were no caregiver birds represented who could potentially be used as a secure base, this may represent how children perceived

emotionally and perhaps physically absent parents. Even in Tamia's drawing, the environment is depicted as dangerous, which may also reflect the way the child perceived the world around her. Although Tamia depicted a parent bird who could be used as a secure base, according to Tamia's story this bird left during the storm – a threat to the wellbeing of her babies, suggesting that Tamia's mother may not have provided a sense of security in times of danger.

Themes in the Stories

Gonick and Gold (1992) stated that in the drawings created by foster children, themes of danger appeared frequently, and children's narratives often included fear, disaster, vulnerability, and a lack of protection. This is also consistent with this study's as they also indicated that all participants shared similar theme including vulnerability, fear, lack of protection, loss of the nest, and some type of a threat to the wellbeing of the bird(s) living in the nest.

Keisha's nest was blown away by the wind and fell down on the ground; Isaiah told a story about the bird family and described the destruction of both first and second nests by an eagle. Isaiah may also have felt responsible for the eagle's destruction of the nest as according to his story the baby bird could have tried to convince the eagle via the dialogue to be non-aggressive towards the bird family. Tamia spoke about a thunderstorm that destroyed the nest and could have also killed the baby birds. All the birds in the children's stories lost their homes, which is also what happened to these children when they were placed in foster homes.

The destruction and loss of the nest suggested that the children may have been expressing their feelings of anger, experience of loss, and sadness through the

metaphor. The loss due to external threats noted in children's stories may have indicated how the children perceived the threats that led to the loss of their homes. It is interesting that all of the stories had a positive and happy ending when the birds in these stories found or built new nests. Gonick and Gold (1992) described similar themes when children expressed brave escape and victory over unsafe situations.

It is suggested that all three participants in this study may have hopes for positive outcomes to their own experiences of struggles and the initial loss of their family and home. The positive endings could also indicate role reversal, idealization of a parent, and wish-fulfilling desires as a way to cope with the negative circumstances the children are currently managing loss of biological parents in their own homes. The wish-fulfillment themes were also identified in Hoffman's (2010) master's thesis where foster children viewed their mothers with only positive traits. Hoffman suggested that it was the children's way to cope with their insecure attachment and separation from their biological families. There is also a possibility that the children's expression of positive endings in this study may have indicated that children felt safe in their current foster home placements.

Clinical Implications

The results of this study extended the existing body of research on attachment theory, Bird's Nest Drawing, and foster care children and provided additional support for incorporating the individual's stories with this assessment tool.

Support for the Use of the Assessment with Foster Care Children

The findings indicated that foster children who participated in this study were able to use the metaphor of the bird's nest and story to communicate important

information about their perception of home and family within a timeframe of one 50-minute session. This suggests that BND is a valuable and effective tool to use with foster children during an initial assessment. The BND art therapy assessment can assess attachment patterns and provide a more thorough understanding of the child and his or her attachment experiences within a short period of time. This may positively impact treatment planning and development of a therapeutic relationship.

It is suggested that art therapist could administer the BND at the beginning of treatment of foster care children, as it could provide the potential for collecting valuable attachment information in one session. Having information on a child's attachment pattern would allow clinicians to create individualized treatment that would target identified goals related to the child's attachment pattern. Insecure attachment is associated with behavior problems and the inability to adequately relate to others, increasing the chances of disruption of care and change of placement. Helping a child to heal disturbed attachments may increase his or her ability to maintain healthy relationships, which in turn could increase the possibility of stable placement and for healthy relationships later in life.

It is suggested that the BND may also be administered again later in treatment as the child makes progress. Comparative data from these drawings could be used by clinicians to evaluate the progress the child is making in therapy. Information may present new findings that could be implemented in the treatment plan and addressed in therapy.

It is important to note that the findings from this study indicate that the BND art therapy assessment does not require extensive training and can increase useful skills

of the clinician. While only art therapists should administer the BND, Sheller has reported that other attachment assessment tools are difficult to administer and focus on one measure or on actions and behaviors only (Fury, Carlson, & Sroufe, 1997; George & West, 2001; Hall & Geher, 2003; Main, 1995; Marvin & Whelan, 2003; Pianta, Longmaid, & Ferguson, 1999; Scott, 2003; Solomon & George, 1999, as all cited in Sheller, 2004).

The Bird's Nest

Two out of three children in this study depicted an empty nest. Kaiser (1996) has suggested that the bird's nest symbolizes an unconscious metaphor for the person's perception of his or her home and family. Although it may seem that foster children may view a home as something that is provided for them, however, the nest is empty, then a home may be also be perceived as empty and children may feel lonely and isolated.

Therapist may use bird's nest as a metaphor for home and/or house. It is suggested for a therapist to explore the difference between the meaning of a house and a home for a client. House is a structure that might be adequate or not while home implies warmth and relationships. Children in this study have a house, a certain structure that is being provided for them. However, the images of a bird's nest created by the first two participants appear isolated and empty, which suggest that children may lack the experience of warmth of a loving and supporting home.

Also all children in this study stated that the depicted nests were destroyed, which may also reflect the loss and/or destruction of their own homes and therefore their families. It is suggested that an art therapist can explore this metaphor in order to

explore child's understanding of what an empty nest means to him or her, what it is like for the bird to have an empty nest, and what it is like for the bird to have the nest destroyed by external threat (e.g., wind, eagle, storm).

Tree

In two out of three drawings in this study the nest was not supported by the tree, which may represent a lack of support, instability, and/or insecurity. This may be what foster children experience, considering the frequency of multiple placements. It is suggested that art therapists may use this metaphor and explore the themes of safety, support, stability, and possible dangers associated with the nest that was not built on a tree.

Birds

Lack of parent birds in the drawings or a parent bird that is leaving the nest during a dangerous situation suggests the inadequacy or lack of availability of parents who were unable to provide nurturance and protection for their children. This metaphor could be further explored in order to elicit a child's feelings about the lack of protection and nurturance: How did the baby birds feel when the parent bird left the nest? What it is like for baby birds not having someone to take care of them? Is there someone else who is taking care of the baby birds? What does the bird/egg need to feel safe?

Eggs

An egg represents a new and fragile life that is in the process of development. Also eggs are often associated in numbers larger than one, which in the case of foster children may represent siblings. Two out of three children did not depict any eggs and

one child depicted three eggs. Lack of eggs may suggest the separation from siblings and/or a lack connectedness with them. In order to work through the loss and separation, art therapists may explore this metaphor to understand the feelings a child may have about being separated from his or her siblings,.

Themes in the Stories

The themes of abandonment, loss of the home, and threats to the wellbeing of the individuals that surfaced in the stories may provide valuable clinical information (Kaiser & Deaver, 2009). This information can be addressed in the art psychotherapy setting with the foster child population in order to explore conscious and unconscious conflicts, schemas, and perceptions about the self, family, and home environment. Kaiser (1996) noted that using the BND with clients may also increase a client's understanding of relationship and intimacy issues, which may lead to recognition and increased insight and promote healing.

All children in this study also shared positive outcomes for their stories, which suggest hope and wish fulfillment fantasies. These feelings can be explored during treatment in order to help the child work through the loss and separation from their family of origin. Hope also appears to be a strength for this population, which could be supported by the therapist.

Suggested Goals and Directives

Considering that children in foster care experience loss and separation from their biological families and some may have also experienced maltreatment and neglect, the following therapy goals are suggested:

- 1) The safe release of feelings associated with loss and separation;

- 2) Restoration of a sense of trust in others;
- 3) Recovery of a sense of mastery and control in life; and
- 4) Develop the ability to create and maintain healthy and positive relationships.

Considering the themes that emerged in this study the following directives, including rationale for each one, is suggested:

- 1) Create a mother and a baby animal

This directive may help further explore internal working model for the archetype of a mother (Hoffman, 2010). Although this archetype is based on the real person the therapist may explore with the client what are some motherly qualities that can be found in other people. Therapist may help the client to explore who holds those motherly qualities to help understand that there are other people who can fulfill these functions.

- 2) Bird's Nest Drawing in 3D

The results of this study indicated that all children appeared to feel comfortable with using the metaphor of the bird's nest. It is suggested to continue using this metaphor through three-dimensional media in order to further explore client's internal model of attachment security. It is also suggested to incorporate role-playing techniques in order to extend the power of metaphor and enable the client to verbalize inner feelings.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

- The delimitation of this research study included the small homogeneous sample of participants from the same facility consisting of representatives of African American ethnicity.
- The limitation of this study was that researcher had prolonged experience working with children who were maltreated, which affected her behavior and resulted in interviews that were attuned to each participant. This may have helped children to feel more comfortable with the researcher and resulted in more open self-expression during the session.
- Another limitation of this study was that The Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Kaiser, & Furman, 2011) that was used in this study is in the process of being revised and had provided examples for some YES/NO art indicators, but did not provide similar examples for other YES/NO indicators. This opened the possibility for great variability, creating inconsistency in the way raters assessed the drawings.
- Inter-rater reliability was low for this study because the rating manual is still in the process of development. The current rating form needs revision and certain questions need to be rephrased for clarity purposes. The Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories should provide clear definitions for certain terms, the lack of which may have affected the way raters understood the questions in the Rating Scale.

Suggestions for Future Research

- This study had a small sample of participants, therefore it is suggested that future research would examine a larger sample of participants in order to provide more data.
- All the participants in this study were African American, hence it is recommended that future research include children from other ethnicities.
- Due to the difference in experiences of children in foster care who are placed in Kinship care (family members) in contrast to children who are placed with non-relative caretakers, it is recommended that future research look at the attachment patterns of children in Kinship care as opposed to children with non-relative caretakers.
- Because all of the participants who participated in this study were in foster care system, it is suggested that future research include children living with their biological families in order to compare the images and themes for similarity and differences.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of Bird's Nest Drawing (BND) art therapy tool and story in order to assess children's attachment patterns and to better understand their internalized attachment security. The design of the study was pilot observational study where qualitative part was the interview process and quantitative part involved the use of the Manual Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, Kaiser, Furman, 2011).

The study was open to up to ten foster children between the ages of seven to eleven who received foster care services at the selected agency, had a history of two or more placements, have been placed in a foster family with a non-relative caretaker and were not diagnosed with a cognitive disability. However, due to unexpected complications in the recruitment process only three participants who were between the ages of nine and eleven signed the consents and completed the data collection process. All participants were African American.

Each participant met with the researcher individually for one session. The collected data for this study included drawings, interview scripts, and a story about the BND. Each participant was provided with a 8 ½ X 11'' sheet of paper, a pencil with eraser and a set of eight thin-line markers. The children were asked to draw a bird's nest. After the drawing was completed the researcher conducted an interview process asking questions related to the drawing. Each child also was asked to tell a story about his or her drawing and if the event was not spontaneously by the child the researcher asked, in a neutral tone of voice, the following question: "Imagine that something happened to the nest. Can you tell me what it was?" Each child required

prompting therefore the researcher asked follow-up questions about their story in order to gain better understanding of the story and the drawing.

The data was analyzed using the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, et al., 2011). All children in this study were assessed as insecurely attached. Findings in this study indicated that children shared themes of vulnerability, fear, lack of protection, loss of the nest and some type of an external threat to the wellbeing of the bird/s living in the nest. However, all of children's stories ended with positive outcomes suggesting hope for the future.

The results of this study showed low inter rater reliability, which may be a result that the Manual for Rating Children's Bird's Nest Drawings and Stories (Gonzales, et al., 2011) used in this study was in the process of being revised and did not provide consistent examples for some art indicators and clear definitions for certain terms used in the Manual.

Due to the small sample size and lack of variety of representatives of other ethnicities drawn from the same foster care agency, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to all children in foster care. However, the results of these findings extended the body of research on attachment theory, Bird's Nest Drawing assessment, yield additional valuable support for the use of stories with this tool and resulted in suggested recommendations for future research and possible clinical implications.

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Appendix A



Dear parent/legal guardian,

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study that will take place at Delta Community Supports. I am conducting this research study as part of my master's thesis in Drexel University's Creative Arts in Therapy Program. My faculty advisor is Elizabeth Hartzell, Ph.D.

For this study, we are trying to understand child's relationship to his/her caregiver and other important people in his/her life. For many children it is easier to communicate their feelings and thoughts through art, as it is a normal and typical activity. If your child is in this study the co-investigator will ask him/her to draw a picture of a bird's nest. The co-investigator will ask your child to explain his/her drawing. At the end of the procedure your child will receive a pack of Crayola washable markers. To thank you for enrolling your child in this study, we will mail you a \$15 gift card to Target.

This research may help therapists, social workers and other mental health professionals to better understand children in foster care system. If you are interested in enrolling your child into this study or have any questions please contact me by phone at 215-469-1858.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Veronika Redtschitz, Graduate Art Therapy Student and co-investigator

Elizabeth Hartzell, Ph.D, ATR-BC, LPC and faculty advisor

Appendix B



Drexel University Recruiting Volunteers for a Research Study

Research Title

Assessing and exploring the attachment in foster children through the use of bird's nest art therapy task and narrative story.

Research Objectives

The objective of this pilot study is to understand child's relationship to his/her caregiver and to other important people in his/her life. Children will be asked to draw a bird's nest and then talk about their drawings. No art skills are required to participate.

Information on Research Subjects Eligibility

Both male and female children 7-11 years of age can participate in this study. The child can participate in this study if she/he is:

- Receiving foster care services from Delta Community Supports
- Placed into foster family with a non-relative caretaker
- Has not been diagnosed with a cognitive disability
- Has a history of at least two foster home placements
- Not a ward of the state

All name and identities will be kept confidential.

Remuneration

Parent/legal guardian will receive a \$15 Target gift card after your child has participated in the data collection procedure. Your child will receive a pack of Crayola washable markers.

Location of research and person to contact for further information

This study will take place at Delta Community Supports.

You and your child's names and identifications will not be included anywhere in the final publication of the study.

Veronika Redtschitz
215-469-1858

This research is conducted by a researcher who is a member of Drexel University

Appendix C

Page 1 of 4

**DREXEL UNIVERSITY
PERMISSION TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

1. PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN NAME: _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

2. TITLE OF RESEARCH: Assessing And Exploring The Attachment In Foster Children Through The Use Of Bird's Nest Art Therapy Task And Narrative Story

3. INVESTIGATOR'S NAME: Elizabeth Hartzell, PhD, ATR-BC, LPC
CO-INVESTIGATOR: Veronika Redtschitz

4. RESEARCH ENTITY: Drexel University

5. PERMISSION FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY: This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researcher to perform research studies on your child. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this permission form to discuss it with your family member, attorney or any one else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable in participating in this study.

6. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH: Your child is being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand child's relationship to his/her caregiver and to other important people in his/her life. Your child has been asked to take part because he/she is 7-11 years of age, currently is in a foster home with a non-relative caretaker, has not been diagnosed with cognitive disability and your child is not a ward of the state. We will recruit ten participants. All children will work individually with the co-investigator.

For many children it is easier to communicate their feelings and thoughts through art, as it is a normal and typical activity. The findings of this research study may help therapists and social workers to better understand foster children.

You may choose for your child to not participate in this study or withdraw him/her at any time.

This research is a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master in Arts for the co-investigator conducting this study.

Parent/Legal Guardian Initials _____

7. PROCEDURES AND DURATION: You understand that the following things will be done with your child as part of this research study:

- Your child will be transported to Delta Community Supports.
- The total time commitment for this procedure will be approximately 50 minutes.
- The participation in this study is a onetime event.
- The procedure will take place in the conference room at Delta Community Supports.
- Your child will be given a 8 ½ X 11” sheet of white paper, a pencil with eraser, and a pack of eight thin-line markers.
- The co-investigator will ask your child to draw a bird’s nest. This process will take approximately 20 minutes.
- After the task is completed the co-investigator will ask to your child to explain his/her drawing and tell a story about it.
- This interview will take approximately 30 minutes.
- Upon completion of this procedure your child will be taken back to his/her home.
- Your child’s drawing will be photographed and be included in the co-investigator’s master’s thesis. All names will be kept confidential and replaced by false names. After the drawings are photographed your child’s artwork can be returned. If you and your child do not want the artwork back, then it will be destroyed.

8. RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/CONSTRAINTS: Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks, which may be minimal. There is a possibility that your child may feel mild anxiety. To minimize this, the procedure will take place in a private room at Delta Community Supports, which is a familiar place for you and your child. The co-investigator will explain to your child that their artwork is not being judged based on his/her drawing skills. Most children, aged seven to eleven, make art as a normal and typical activity. If your child becomes upset he/she can talk about how they feel with the co-investigator, take a break, or talk to their caseworker.

9. UNFORESEEN RISKS: Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. If unforeseen risks are seen, they will be reported to the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857, Dr. Hartzell at 215-762-3767.

10. BENEFITS: There may be no direct benefits from participating in this study for your child. However, understanding foster children better may help therapists, social workers and parents to help them more effectively.

11. ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES: The alternative is not to participate in this study.

Parent/Legal Guardian Initials _____

12. REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY: You or your child may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:

- If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reasons by the co-investigator, or university authorities.
- If your child's participation in the study is adversely affecting their academic performance.
- If your child fail to adhere to requirements for participation established by the co-investigator.

13. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can refuse for your child to be in the study or stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences if you decide for your child not to participate or to stop.

14. STIPEND/REIMBURSEMENT: You will receive a \$15 Target gift card after your child has participated in the procedure. Your child will receive a pack of Crayola washable markers.

15. RESPONSIBILITY FOR COST: The co-investigator will be responsible for any costs relating to this study.

16. IN CASE OF INJURY: If you have any questions or believe you have been injured in any way by being in this research study, you should contact Dr. Elizabeth Hartzell at telephone number 215-762-3767. However, neither the investigator nor Drexel University will make payment for injury, illness, or other loss resulting from your being in this research project. If your child is injured by this research activity, medical care including hospitalization is available, but may result in costs to you or your insurance company because the University does not agree to pay for such costs. If your child is injured or have an adverse reaction, you should also contact the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.

CONFIDENTIALITY: In any publication or presentation of research results, your and your child's identities will be kept confidential, but there is a possibility that records which identify you and your child may be inspected by authorized individuals such as representatives of the institutional review boards (IRBs), or employees conducting peer review activities. You agree to such inspections and to the copying of excerpts of your records, if required by any of these representatives. You confidentiality may also need to be broken because of legal reporting requirements if research discloses reportable events such as presence of abuse, neglect or/and maltreatment.

Transcribed writings, this permission form and child's assent form will be all stored in a locked and secure file in the Hahnemann and Creative Arts in Therapy Program

Parent/Legal Guardian Initials _____

offices by the principal investigator until three years after your child turns 18 years, at which time they will be destroyed. The second copy of permission form will be given to you and child's assent form will be stored in child's file at Delta Community Supports.

18. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: If new information arises that may affect you and your child and you might change your decision to participate in this study, you will be informed by the co-investigator. If you have questions at any time you have the right to contact the principal investigator, Dr. Elizabeth Hartzell at 215-762-3767. If you wish further information regarding your child's rights as a research participant or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution's Office of Regulatory Research Compliance by telephoning 215-255-7857.

19. PERMISSION:

- **I have been informed of the reasons for this study.**
- **I have had the study explained to me.**
- **I have had all of my questions answered.**
- **I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.**
- **I give permission voluntarily.**

Subject or Legally Authorized Representative

Date

Investigator or Individual Obtaining this Permission

Date

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain this Permission

Name	Title	Day Phone #	24 Hr Phone #
Elizabeth Hartzell, PhD	Principle Investigator	215-726-3767	215-726-3767
Veronika Redtschitz	Co-Investigator	215-469-1858	215-469-1858

Parent/Legal Guardian Initials _____

Appendix D

Subject Initials _____
Page 1 of 1**DREXEL UNIVERSITY
ASSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN/MINOR IN A RESEARCH STUDY**

You are being asked to be in a study. This study is to see how children in foster care think about their home and families. You parent/legal guardian have said that it is ok for you to be in this study,

If you agree to be in this study we will ask you to make a drawing and Ms. Veronika will ask you some questions about it. There is no right or wrong way to make this drawing. I will tape record our meeting and then erase it so no one else will be able to listen to it. I will take a photo of your drawing for my paper but I will not use your name.

You can make this drawing only if you want to. If you want to stop and take a break or talk to your caseworker that is ok. You can change your mind if you don't want to draw or talk anymore. You will not get in trouble if you want to stop.

If you tell me that someone has hurt you then I have to tell this to a responsible adult at Delta, but not to the person that hurt you.

Child's Assent: I have been told about the study and know why it is being done and what to do. I also know that I do not have to do it if I do not want to. If I have questions, I can ask Veronika Redtschitz. I can stop at any time.

My parents/guardians know that I am being asked to be in this study.

Child's Signature_____
Date

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtaining this Assent

Name	Title	Day Phone #	24 Hr Phone #
Elizabeth Hartzell, PhD	Principle Investigator	215-726-3767	215-726-3767
Veronika Redtschitz	Co-Investigator	215-469-1858	215-469-1858

Appendix E

Participant # _____

Rater # _____

Circle the response, YES or NO, which best represents your level of agreement with each item.

Drawing - Developmental Stage			
1. The drawing shows detail appropriate to the developmental stage of the child. If the drawing includes 3 or more of the following: a nest with eggs, birds/bird families, leaves/branches on trees, weather is indicated (i.e., sun, clouds, rain, etc.) and if the textures of objects are included, choose YES. If the drawing includes fewer than 3 of these elements and/or the textures of objects are NOT included, choose NO.		Yes	No
2. The drawing is spatially organized. If a ground/horizon line (not to be confused with the baseline or bottom of the page) and one spatial viewpoint are present (NO flattening of space, NO folding over, NO transparencies or x-rays), choose YES. Otherwise, choose NO		Yes	No
3. The drawing shows realistic, age-appropriate use of color. If realistic color is used, shading, mixing of colors, and/or different hues are present, choose YES. If the drawing is pencil only with shading and/or line variation, choose YES. If the drawing is pencil only without shading and/or line variation, choose NO.		Yes	No
Drawing - Formal Qualities			
4. The drawing is well organized. If the composition of the drawing is full, balanced, and appropriate (utilizes more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the paper) choose YES. If the overall drawings is excessively large, small (utilizes less than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the paper) not proportionate, is hugging the baseline or bottom of the page, has floating objects. Significant images are off the page or the drawing is unbalanced, choose NO.		Yes	No
5. The drawing is free of omissions, excessive erasures, cross-outs, or exaggerated elements. If the bird's nest is omitted, if there are excessive erasures, elements that are crossed out, unfinished objects, restarts or significant elements drawn larger than necessary or that are off the paper edge, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES.		Yes	No

6. The drawing has line quality that is controlled, fluid and varied. If more than 50% of the drawing contains lines that are broken, sketchy, scribbled, multi-directional, or excessively heavy or light, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES	Yes	No
Drawing – Content		
7. The drawing has a nest, eggs, parent bird, baby birds and a tree*. * A partial limb/branch is considered a tree. If the drawing has 3 or more of these elements, choose YES. If the drawing has fewer than 3 of these elements, choose NO.	Yes	No
8. The drawing Includes a nest that is well supported. If the contents of the nest appear that they could fall out (i.e., wreath shaped nest), if the nest is unsupported or floating, on the ground, appears to be supported by or is on the edge of a weak or disconnected limb, or is on top of a tree or other support in an exposed fashion, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES.	Yes	No
9. The drawing is realistic. If there are bizarre, disorganized, incoherent, unrelated, or unusual elements or approaches to the drawing, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES.	Yes	No
Story – Content		
10. The overall theme of the story theme is positive. If negative themes such as abandonment, danger, failed protection, fear, helplessness, isolation, or vulnerability are present, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES.	Yes	No
11. The story is coherent and appropriate in length. If the story is unrelated to the drawing, excessively vague or meandering/rambling, or a literal description of the drawing, choose NO. Otherwise, choose YES.	Yes	No
Enter Total Number of YES and NO responses here.		